Statistical Bulletin

METROPOLITAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

Volume 36 OCTOBER 1955 *Number 10*

The American Wife

THE pattern of family life in the United States has changed markedly since World War II. The married population has risen to a record high, the birth rate is at the highest level in a generation, and more wives than ever before are actively participating in the economic life of the country.

Married women in our population numbered not far from 40 million in April 1954, a gain of 9¾ million since 1940 and of more than 2⅓ million since 1950. According to present indications, they may total nearly 42½ million by 1960.

Most American wives are relatively young, as the table on page 2 shows; almost two fifths are under age 35 and an additional one fourth are in the age group 35-44. This situation reflects our tradition of early marriage as well as the upsurge in marriages during and immediately after World War II. In fact, almost one half of all the wives in our country have married since 1940. At the other extreme, there are now more than 2.7 million married women at ages 65 and over; nine tenths of them have been married a quarter century or more.

In the great majority of families the wife is somewhat younger than her husband, but in about one eighth of the families she is older than her spouse. More than half the married women under 25 years of age have husbands who are 25 or older. Less than 2½ percent of the wives at ages 25-34 are married to men under age 25.

The typical wife lives with her husband in a household of their own; this is the situation in nine tenths of the families. A considerable proportion of the couples who share the living quarters of relatives or others are young people—about one third of these wives are under 25 years of age. Only about 6 percent of all married women live apart from their husband, and in most of these cases it is not because of marital discord. Many husbands are away from home in civilian employment; about 446,000 are in the Armed Forces, a large number having married shortly before or soon after entering military service.

More than one half of all married couples have young children living with them. Nearly four fifths of the families in which the wife is aged 25-34 have at least one child in their care. Many married women past midlife are still responsible for bringing up children; this

CHARACTERISTICS OF WIVES IN THE UNITED STATES, APRIL 1954

CHARACTERISTIC	AGE OF WIFE, IN YEARS					
	14 and over	14-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65 and over
Wives—number in thousands	39,869	4,479	10,660	9,819	12,208	2,703
—percent of all women in age group	67.0	37.6	86.7	85.8	73.7	36.9
Age of husband*—percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
14-24 years	5.8	45.0	2.4	.1	—	—
25-34 years	24.4	51.6	63.8	4.8	.2	.1
35-44 years	24.2	3.2	30.6	58.8	3.2	.1
45-64 years	34.4	.2	3.1	35.7	80.7	8.9
65 years and over	11.2	—	.1	.6	15.9	90.9
Year of marriage†—percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1952-April 1953	3.9	21.4	2.9	1.2	.8	.4
1950-1951	7.6	37.4	7.4	3.0	1.3	.9
1945-1949	20.5	39.5	43.6	10.8	3.9	2.1
1940-1944	15.1	1.7	34.1	17.3	4.5	2.0
1930-1939	22.1	—	12.0	56.7	15.9	2.7
Before 1930	30.8	—	—	11.0	73.6	91.9
Family status—percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Living with husband, in	93.7	87.8	94.1	94.4	94.4	95.6
Own household	90.0	77.6	90.0	92.0	92.4	91.6
Relative's household	3.3	9.5	3.8	1.9	1.5	3.9
Nonrelative's household	.4	.7	.3	.5	.5	.1
Not living with husband‡	6.3	12.2	5.9	5.6	5.6	4.4
Husband in Armed Forces	1.1	6.3	1.0	.4	.1	—
Separated because of marital discord	2.8	3.3	2.8	3.1	2.9	1.4
Living apart for other reasons	2.4	2.6	2.1	2.1	2.6	3.0
Number of own children under 18 years of age* —percent‡	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
No children	44.3	28.6	22.1	36.0	66.3	92.3
One child	21.0	32.1	26.1	21.2	16.0	4.3
Two children	18.1	22.8	27.3	20.8	9.3	1.7
Three children	9.5	11.0	14.9	11.8	4.2	1.0
Four children or more	7.1	5.5	9.6	10.2	4.2	.7
Own children under age 18 per 100 wives	120	137	172	147	68	14
Labor force participation†—percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Living with husband						
Husband only in labor force	62.0	65.1	69.2	63.3	62.1	36.9
Husband and wife in labor force	23.1	23.1	23.6	30.5	21.0	3.6
Wife only in labor force	1.2	.8	.4	.8	2.4	1.6
Neither in labor force	6.9	.7	.8	1.0	9.3	52.1
Not living with husband						
Wife in labor force	2.8	4.8	3.0	2.5	2.6	.7
Wife not in labor force	3.1	5.5	3.0	1.9	2.6	5.1
Residence—percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Urban	65.3	60.0	65.6	67.6	65.4	64.0
Rural nonfarm	22.0	26.8	24.3	20.5	19.9	20.5
Rural farm	12.7	13.2	10.1	11.9	14.7	15.5

*Data relate to wives living with husband in April 1953.
†Data relate to married persons in April 1953.
‡Estimated by the Statistical Bureau, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

Source of basic data: Various reports and unpublished data from the Bureau of the Census.

is the case for one third of the wives at ages 45-64. Although the proportion decreases at the older ages, even families where the wife is 65 or older have more than ⅓ million of their children under 18 years of age living with them. In addition, a large number of grandchildren and other relatives are found in such families, often because the youngsters have lost one or both natural parents. Many middle-aged couples also provide for their own or related children who are past age 18, but who are not yet self-supporting.

Although the majority of husbands still bear the sole responsibility for supporting their family, an increasing number of wives are in gainful employment. Currently, about 10.7 million married women—27 percent of the total—are in the labor force. It has long been customary for young wives to work until the baby came, but recently more and more of them are returning to the labor market after the children grow up. Thus, about one third of all wives at ages 35-44 now work outside the home; the proportion is one fourth for those in the age range 45-64. The fact that about two out of every three married women live in urban areas enables many to take advantage of employment opportunities in industry.

A large proportion of employed wives work part time or intermittently. Their earnings are nevertheless an appreciable contribution toward the family budget. Under the circumstances it is not surprising that large numbers of women purchase Life insurance to protect their dependents and to build a savings fund. The total amount of Life insurance in force on the lives of women in the United States now exceeds $50 billion and is rising rapidly.

State Variations in Longevity

THE five leading States with respect to longevity among white males—South Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota, Iowa, and Kansas—lie in the West North Central section of the country. In each of these States the expectation of life at birth for white males was 68 years or more at the midcentury. Among white females it was over 70 years in every State of the Union except New Mexico. Just a decade earlier Nebraska was the only State in which the expectation of life at birth among white females reached 70 years. These are findings from life tables computed in the Statistical Bureau of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company on the basis of mortality for the general population in each of the 48 States and the District of Columbia. A summary of the results for the white population in 1949-51* is shown in the table on page 4.

In South Dakota the expectation

*The complete life tables by sex and single years of age for the individual States as well as for the geographic divisions of the United States will be published by the National Office of Vital Statistics.

EXPECTATION OF LIFE AND MORTALITY IN EACH STATE, 1949-51
WHITE MALES AND FEMALES, AT BIRTH AND AT AGES 25 AND 65

STATE*	EXPECTATION OF LIFE IN YEARS						ANNUAL MORTALITY RATE PER 1,000					
	WHITE MALES			WHITE FEMALES			WHITE MALES			WHITE FEMALES		
	At Birth	Age 25	Age 65	At Birth	Age 25	Age 65	First Year of Life	Age 25	Age 65	First Year of Life	Age 25	Age 65
South Dakota	68.4	46.8	13.4	73.6	51.1	15.5	27.1	2.0	28.2	19.9	0.8	18.1
Nebraska	68.2	46.8	13.5	74.0	51.6	15.9	27.5	1.7	28.0	20.0	.8	16.7
Minnesota	68.2	46.6	13.3	73.4	50.9	15.4	27.1	1.5	29.6	21.7	.7	19.0
Iowa	68.2	46.8	13.4	73.7	51.2	15.6	29.2	1.6	28.5	20.9	.8	17.1
Kansas	68.0	46.5	13.4	73.7	51.4	15.8	28.0	1.8	28.8	20.5	.9	16.6
North Dakota	67.9	46.7	13.4	73.2	50.7	15.0	31.4	2.1	28.0	22.2	.7	18.0
Arkansas	67.8	46.7	14.1	73.5	51.4	16.1	31.4	2.0	27.5	23.9	1.0	16.3
Connecticut	67.7	45.4	12.8	72.8	49.9	15.0	23.8	1.1	35.5	18.4	.6	22.1
Wisconsin	67.6	46.1	13.1	72.5	50.0	14.9	28.9	1.6	31.6	21.3	.8	20.9
Oklahoma	67.4	46.3	13.7	73.8	51.8	16.1	31.7	1.8	28.9	23.6	.9	16.3
Utah	66.9	45.6	13.1	73.4	51.1	15.8	27.4	2.1	30.3	19.7	1.0	16.4
Missouri	66.8	45.5	13.0	72.5	50.3	15.3	30.3	1.6	32.5	24.0	.9	19.0
Washington	66.7	45.2	12.9	72.9	50.5	15.5	28.7	1.7	33.2	21.4	.9	19.1
Massachusetts	66.7	44.6	12.4	72.1	49.3	14.8	26.0	1.3	37.3	20.1	.8	22.6
Oregon	66.7	45.4	13.1	73.4	50.8	15.6	27.0	2.3	31.5	19.0	.9	17.6
Rhode Island	66.7	44.5	12.1	71.7	49.0	14.4	26.8	.9	39.0	23.0	.7	23.3
Ohio	66.6	45.1	12.8	72.1	49.7	14.9	29.0	1.6	33.9	22.4	.8	21.0
New Jersey	66.6	44.5	12.2	71.5	48.8	14.3	25.6	1.2	39.0	20.0	.8	23.9
Florida	66.6	45.3	13.8	73.7	51.5	16.5	30.8	1.9	32.0	23.6	.9	16.2
New Hampshire	66.6	45.0	12.6	72.3	49.8	15.2	29.4	1.2	36.1	20.6	.9	22.1
North Carolina	66.5	45.1	13.1	72.9	50.6	15.4	30.9	1.8	32.2	23.9	.8	18.3
Idaho	66.5	45.6	13.3	73.1	50.9	15.6	29.6	2.3	31.1	22.1	1.0	17.5
Michigan	66.5	45.0	12.6	71.8	49.5	14.7	29.6	1.5	35.1	22.4	.9	21.5
Maine	66.4	45.5	13.0	71.6	49.6	14.9	35.1	1.7	32.5	26.5	1.0	22.2
Indiana	66.4	45.2	12.8	71.9	49.7	15.0	30.5	1.8	33.4	23.0	1.0	20.2
Mississippi	66.3	45.3	13.0	72.6	50.5	15.3	34.0	2.1	31.1	26.1	1.0	18.2
Vermont	66.3	45.1	12.8	72.1	49.8	15.0	32.3	1.7	34.3	23.2	1.0	20.1
Maryland	66.3	44.3	12.3	71.9	49.3	14.6	26.1	1.3	37.6	20.8	.7	22.4
New York	66.3	44.3	12.2	71.3	48.6	14.2	26.3	1.3	38.5	20.4	.8	24.1
United States	66.3	44.9	12.8	72.0	49.8	15.0	30.7	1.7	34.5	23.6	.9	20.6
Colorado	66.3	45.8	13.3	72.2	50.6	15.8	39.2	1.8	30.4	29.2	1.1	17.5
Tennessee	66.2	45.4	13.1	71.6	50.1	15.1	37.4	2.0	30.0	31.2	1.0	18.4
Illinois	66.0	44.3	12.4	71.6	49.1	14.6	27.6	1.5	37.2	21.5	.8	22.9
Louisiana	66.0	44.5	12.7	72.8	50.4	15.3	29.1	1.8	35.3	22.2	.8	19.2
Alabama	66.0	45.1	13.0	72.2	50.3	15.1	36.1	2.1	31.4	26.2	1.0	18.8
Delaware	66.0	44.4	12.2	71.3	48.9	14.4	28.5	1.6	38.4	23.7	.8	22.8
Virginia	66.0	44.9	12.7	72.4	50.3	15.2	34.2	1.8	34.1	25.4	.9	19.5
Pennsylvania	65.9	44.2	12.2	71.0	48.5	14.2	29.3	1.5	38.3	22.8	.8	24.4
Georgia	65.9	44.5	12.9	72.8	50.5	15.4	31.3	2.1	33.9	23.0	.9	18.4
California	65.8	44.3	12.6	72.7	50.3	15.7	28.5	1.9	36.1	21.1	.9	18.6
Montana	65.7	44.6	12.8	72.4	50.0	15.1	30.8	2.0	32.3	21.4	1.1	19.5
Kentucky	65.7	45.3	13.3	71.3	49.9	15.2	30.6	2.5	28.8	30.9	1.4	18.1
Wyoming	65.5	45.2	12.9	72.1	50.5	15.6	37.5	2.6	33.3	24.7	1.4	17.3
Texas	65.4	45.3	13.3	72.1	51.2	16.1	42.5	2.4	31.7	34.3	1.3	16.9
West Virginia	65.3	44.9	13.3	71.1	49.5	15.1	40.2	2.7	29.8	30.7	1.3	20.1
District of Columbia	65.1	43.1	11.9	72.7	50.1	15.3	32.6	1.2	40.6	23.6	.7	20.3
South Carolina	64.8	43.6	12.5	72.4	50.2	15.3	33.9	2.2	38.7	23.9	.9	19.8
New Mexico	64.3	45.5	13.5	69.1	49.5	15.6	57.2	2.6	28.6	49.7	1.6	19.1
Arizona	63.3	43.1	12.8	71.4	50.5	16.3	42.3	2.7	37.7	34.3	1.4	17.5
Nevada	62.8	42.3	11.9	71.5	49.7	15.5	38.9	2.7	39.0	24.4	1.5	20.8

*Ranked according to the expectation of life at birth for white males.

Source: Computed by the Statistical Bureau of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company from mortality and population data supplied by the National Office of Vital Statistics and the Bureau of the Census.

of life at birth for white males in 1949-51 was 68.4 years; at the other extreme, in Nevada, it was 62.8 years—5.6 years less than that for the leading State. Ranking just above Nevada were two other Mountain States, Arizona and New Mexico. For white females the expectation of life at birth ranged from 74.0 years in Nebraska to 69.1 in New Mexico, a difference of 4.9 years.

Every State recorded an increase in expectation of life at birth between 1939-41 and 1949-51, the gains generally being largest in the areas which formerly had the least favorable records. The greatest increases occurred in New Mexico, where they amounted to 7.1 years for white males and 8.1 years for the females. The gains were almost as large in Arizona, namely, 6.5 years and 7.7 years, respectively. By contrast, the smallest increase for white males (1.9 years) was recorded in Nebraska and for white females (3.6 years) in South Dakota.

The State variations in expectation of life are appreciably smaller at the adult ages than at birth. At age 25, the average remaining lifetime of white men in 1949-51 ranged from 46.8 years in South Dakota, Nebraska, and Iowa to 42.3 years in Nevada. For white females at age 25, the figures varied from 51.8 years in Oklahoma to 48.5 years in Pennsylvania. At age 65, the best record for men was made by Arkansas and the least favorable by the District of Columbia, the figures being 14.1 and 11.9 years, respectively. Among white females, the expectation of life at age 65 varied from 16.5 years in Florida to 14.2 years in New York and Pennsylvania.

The mortality rates for the individual States are shown in the right-hand panel of the table. Although State differences in infant mortality have been greatly reduced, the variations were still very appreciable in 1949-51. In New Mexico, for example, the rate was about 2½ times that in Connecticut. Another point of special interest is the low level of mortality in early adult life. In three fifths of the States, the mortality rate at age 25 was under 2 per 1,000 among white men and less than 1 per 1,000 among white women.

The geographic differences in longevity and mortality reflect a wide variety of factors, including variations in the occupational distribution and the economic level of the population, the availability and adequacy of public health and medical services, and climatic conditions. In some areas of the United States special factors exert a considerable influence. In the Southwest, the relatively large Spanish-speaking population has for many years been subject to an unfavorable mortality experience. Interstate migration also has had a bearing on the comparative standing of the States. Thus the mortality among older people in Florida and California reflects not only the experience of their native populations but also that of people who had spent most of their lives in other areas of the country.

The Leading Causes of Accidental Death

ALTHOUGH accidents are largely amenable to control, they take about 95,000 lives annually in the United States. They are among the first five causes of death at every age period, and outrank every disease as a killer among children and young adults.

The accident death rate at all ages combined is much higher among males than among females; in 1951-52 the rates for the two sexes averaged 87.5 and 37.4 per 100,000, respectively, a ratio of 2⅓ to 1. The higher toll among males reflects not only their greater exposure to occupational and recreational hazards, but also their greater daring.

Many types of mishaps contribute to the heavy loss of life from accidents, but the majority of the deaths are caused by relatively few types of injury. This holds true at every age period in each sex; the details are shown in the table on page 7, which relates to the experience of the general population of the United States in 1951-52.

Motor vehicle mishaps are a dominant item in the accident picture at every period of life under age 65; at the older ages they are outranked only by falls. Among males, motor vehicle accidents accounted for at least 30 percent of all accidental deaths in every age group shown in the table; at ages 20-24 they were responsible for 65 percent of the total. It is significant that among these young men, aircraft fatalities ranked second as a cause of accidental death. Among females, motor vehicles are *relatively* more important than among males during the greater part of life; however, in terms of actual death rates, females consistently have the more favorable experience. For each sex, the loss of life among drivers and passengers exceeds that among pedestrians in virtually every age period, and by a very considerable margin in early adult life.

The mortality from accidental falls increases very sharply with age in later life. In 1951-52, the average death rate from this cause among men rose from 15.8 per 100,000 in the age range 45-64 to 97.5 at ages 65 and over; for females the corresponding rise was from 5.7 to 140.3 per 100,000. More than 70 percent of all deaths from accidental falls occur at ages 65 and over. The large majority of these fatal injuries among the aged are sustained in the home.

In contrast to the experience for falls, drownings are much more frequent among males than among females, and take their largest toll among children and young adults. In 1951-52, drowning accounted for one in every four deaths from accidents among boys at ages 5-14, and for one in every seven at the preschool ages and the late teens. The highest death rate from drowning among males—12.3 per 100,000—was recorded at ages 15-19; among females the maximum was only 2.9 per 100,000 and occurred at ages 1-4.

Fires are among the leading ac-

MORTALITY FROM LEADING TYPES OF ACCIDENTS IN SPECIFIED AGE GROUPS BY SEX. UNITED STATES, 1951-1952

MALES			FEMALES		
AGE, IN YEARS; TYPE OF ACCIDENT	Average of Death Rates per 100,000	Percent of Total at Each Age	AGE, IN YEARS; TYPE OF ACCIDENT	Average of Death Rates per 100,000	Percent of Total at Each Age
All Ages			**All Ages**		
Total	87.5	100	Total	37.4	100
Motor vehicle	37.1	42	Falls	14.1	38
Falls	13.4	15	Motor vehicle	11.6	31
Drowning*	5.8	7	Fire and explosion	3.8	10
Fire and explosion	5.2	6	Drowning*	1.0	3
Machinery	2.6	3	Inhalation and ingestion of food	0.8	2
1-4			**1-4**		
Total	42.0	100	Total	31.4	100
Motor vehicle	13.9	33	Motor vehicle	9.4	30
Fire and explosion	7.3	17	Fire and explosion	8.3	26
Drowning*	6.5	15	Drowning*	2.9	9
Poisoning by solids and liquids	2.9	7	Poisoning by solids and liquids	2.5	8
Falls	1.9	5	Falls	1.5	5
5-14			**5-14**		
Total	31.8	100	Total	13.8	100
Motor vehicle	11.7	37	Motor vehicle	6.0	43
Drowning*	7.7	24	Fire and explosion	3.1	22
Firearm	2.9	9	Drowning*	1.6	12
Fire and explosion	2.2	7	Firearm	0.5	4
Falls	1.3	4	Falls	0.4	3
15-19			**15-19**		
Total	87.4	100	Total	22.1	100
Motor vehicle	50.2	57	Motor vehicle	15.9	72
Drowning*	12.3	14	Fire and explosion	1.5	7
Firearm	6.1	7	Drowning*	1.3	6
Machinery	2.4	3	Poisonous gas	0.7	3
Falls	2.4	3	Firearm	0.6	3
20-24			**20-24**		
Total	113.1	100	Total	19.0	100
Motor vehicle	73.1	65	Motor vehicle	13.0	68
Aircraft	7.5	7	Fire and explosion	1.7	9
Drowning*	6.6	6	Poisonous gas	0.6	3
Firearm	3.5	3	Drowning*	0.6	3
Falls	3.0	3	Firearm	0.5	3
25-44			**25-44**		
Total	81.5	100	Total	16.9	100
Motor vehicle	40.5	50	Motor vehicle	9.7	57
Falls	5.1	6	Fire and explosion	1.9	11
Fire and explosion	4.3	5	Falls	1.1	7
Aircraft	4.1	5	Poisoning by solids and liquids	0.8	5
Drowning*	3.9	5	Drowning*	0.5	3
45-64			**45-64**		
Total	97.3	100	Total	28.4	100
Motor vehicle	39.4	40	Motor vehicle	13.9	49
Falls	15.8	16	Falls	5.7	20
Fire and explosion	5.8	6	Fire and explosion	2.9	10
Drowning*	4.7	5	Poisoning by solids and liquids	0.8	3
Machinery	4.1	4	Drowning*	0.7	2
65 and over			**65 and over**		
Total	225.2	100	Total	190.5	100
Falls	97.5	43	Falls	140.3	74
Motor vehicle	66.8	30	Motor vehicle	22.0	12
Fire and explosion	15.1	7	Fire and explosion	11.0	6
Drowning*	5.4	2	Poisonous gas	2.0	1
Poisonous gas	3.7	2	Burns and scalds by hot substances	2.0	1

*Excluding deaths in water transportation.

Source: Various reports of National Office of Vital Statistics.

Note: Data are not shown separately for children under 1 year of age, inasmuch as a large proportion of the accidental deaths at this age are reported as due to mechanical suffocation. Many of the deaths so reported, however, are probably caused by unrecognized respiratory infection.

cident hazards. As the table shows, they take almost as many lives as drowning among males and about four times as many as drowning among females at all ages combined. Young children and old people are the principal victims, in part because they are often unable to escape when a conflagration does occur. Fatal burns are also sustained when persons come in contact with hot substances or objects (liquids and steam, stoves, etc.), such deaths being classified separately. In 1951-52, such burns were among the first five causes of accidental death only among women at ages 65 and over. Several decades ago burns other than those in fires accounted for a much larger death toll than they do currently, a large part of the reduction in mortality resulting from the modernization of the home and advances in the treatment of severe burns.

There are other causes of accidental death which are prominent only at certain age groups. Accidents involving machinery, as one would expect, show up in the table only among men in the main working ages of life. The highest death rate from firearm mishaps occurs among boys in the late teens. Accidental poisoning by solids and liquids, and gas poisoning also account for an appreciable mortality at some periods of life.

Diabetes Mortality in Recent Years

THE death rate from diabetes in the United States, adjusted for changes in the age composition of the population, has decreased somewhat in recent years—from 15.4 per 100,000 in 1949* to 14.0 in 1953, or by 9 percent. A further improvement is indicated by the reduction in the crude death rate from the disease between 1953 and 1954; thus far, in 1955, the death rate has remained at the level of a year ago.

As the accompanying table shows, the largest decrease in the age-adjusted death rate from diabetes occurred among white females; their rate fell continuously from 18.0 to 15.7 per 100,000, or by 13 percent, between 1949 and 1953. The corresponding reduction among white males was 7 percent, but this reflects merely the decrease between 1949 and 1950. In the nonwhite population, the age-adjusted death rate shows no appreciable change for the period under review.

The factors underlying these varying trends are quite complex. Of considerable importance is the fact that general health conditions in the country have been exceptionally good in this period, and there has been relative freedom from severe and widespread outbreaks of respiratory disease. Since the impact of serious infections is greater on diabetics than on most persons with other chronic disorders, the relative-

*Because of changes in the procedure of classifying causes of death with the introduction of the Sixth Revision of the International Lists of Diseases and Causes of Death, the death rates from diabetes beginning with 1949 are not comparable with those in prior years.

MORTALITY FROM DIABETES IN THE UNITED STATES SINCE 1949
CRUDE AND AGE-ADJUSTED* DEATH RATES PER 100,000, BY COLOR AND SEX

YEAR	TOTAL PERSONS		WHITE				NONWHITE			
			MALES		FEMALES		MALES		FEMALES	
	CRUDE	AGE-ADJUSTED	CRUDE	AGE-ADJUSTED	CRUDE	AGE-ADJUSTED	CRUDE	AGE-ADJUSTED	CRUDE	AGE-ADJUSTED
1954†	15.4	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡
1953	16.3	14.0	13.0	11.3	19.9	15.7	9.8	11.6	19.4	23.6
1952	16.4	14.1	13.3	11.5	19.9	15.8	9.8	11.8	18.1	22.2
1951	16.3	14.2	12.8	11.2	20.3	16.3	10.2	12.0	17.9	21.7
1950	16.2	14.3	12.8	11.3	20.0	16.4	10.0	11.6	18.7	22.5
1949	16.9	15.4	13.2	12.1	21.2	18.0	9.3	11.5	18.6	23.8

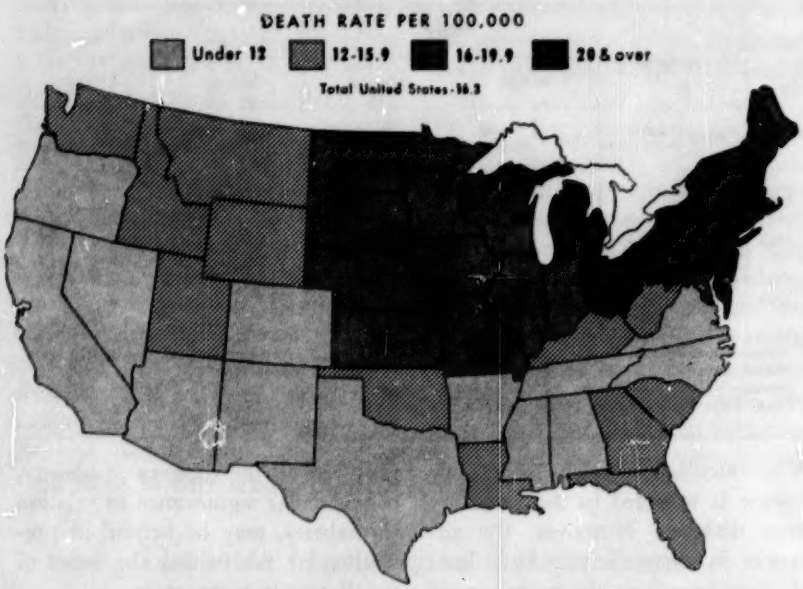
*Computed on basis of the age distribution of the population of the United States as enumerated in 1940.
†Based upon 10-percent sample of death certificates. ‡Not available.
Source: Various publications of National Office of Vital Statistics.
Note: Data exclude Armed Forces overseas.

ly low incidence of acute respiratory disease is reflected in the mortality from diabetes. Moreover, the advances in chemotherapy have been of great benefit in the management of such infections among diabetics.

The trend of the diabetes death rate in recent years also gives some indication of the improvement in control of the disease resulting from the increased emphasis on early diagnosis and from advances in treatment. Further gains along these lines can be achieved. Efforts to diagnose the disease early are being intensified. For example, widespread diabetes-detection campaigns have been organized under the auspices of the American Diabetes Association and its affiliate organizations. Popular education regarding the disease may stimulate the public to have medical examinations regularly and to seek prompt medical attention for symptoms of the disease. In like manner the widespread educational program on the dangers of obesity, of particular significance in relation to diabetes, may be helpful in preventing or postponing the onset of the disease in many cases.

Diabetes mortality shows a fairly consistent geographic pattern; this is seen in the map on page 10, which relates to the period 1950-53. The highest crude death rates from the disease are found in a belt of States extending westward from Massachusetts to Michigan and southward along the Atlantic Coast to Delaware. Death rates are generally below the national average in the South and the Far West, while rates of intermediate magnitude are recorded in the North Central States. The level of the recorded death rate from diabetes in the various States is affected by a number of factors, such as the age and color composition of the population, the proportion living in urban areas, and the amount and quality of medical care.

Average Annual Crude Death Rates From Diabetes By State,* 1950-53



*By place of residence. Excludes Armed Forces overseas.
Source: National Office of Vital Statistics. *Special Reports—National Summaries.*

Although the mortality from diabetes now accounts for less than 2 percent of the total deaths in the population, the disease is more important than is indicated by this low proportion. Deaths ascribed to diabetes now constitute probably less than half of the total among diabetics. Most of the deaths among them, whether or not ascribed to the disease, are accounted for by arteriosclerotic complications.

Many deaths from the disease can be prevented. A study of the experience among Metropolitan Life Insurance Company policyholders with diabetes who died recently showed that 5 percent of the deaths were due to diabetic coma and 6 percent to diabetic gangrene. These direct complications of the disease are much less frequent in adequately treated diabetics. Thus, the recent experience among patients treated at the Joslin Clinic in Boston showed that less than 1 percent of the deaths were due to diabetic coma and only 2½ percent of the deaths to diabetic gangrene. Better medical supervision and management of the disease can add to the well-being and longevity of diabetics.

DEATH RATES* PER 100,000 POLICYHOLDERS FROM SELECTED CAUSES
INDUSTRIAL PREMIUM-PAYING BUSINESS, WEEKLY AND MONTHLY COMBINED
METROPOLITAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY
SEPTEMBER 1955

CAUSE OF DEATH	ANNUAL RATE* PER 100,000 POLICYHOLDERS†				
	SEPTEMBER		YEAR TO DATE		
	1955	1954	1955	1954	1953
All causes—total	588.8	574.2	631.8	632.5	655.4
—excluding war deaths	588.8	573.8	631.8	628.9	653.1
Tuberculosis (all forms)	7.2	7.9	8.2	9.5	10.6
Tuberculosis of respiratory system	6.8	7.0	7.5	8.6	9.5
Syphilis	3.0	2.7	2.3	2.5	2.6
Communicable diseases of childhood	.1	—	.3	.4	.4
Acute poliomyelitis	2.4	1.8	.6	.5	1.0
Malignant neoplasms	123.6	131.1	129.7	129.5	126.1
Digestive system	42.9	50.0	45.5	47.4	44.8
Respiratory system	16.2	16.6	16.5	16.5	15.6
Diabetes mellitus	12.2	12.7	15.1	14.7	15.8
Diseases of the cardiovascular-renal system	302.8	289.7	333.5	329.5	346.7
Vascular lesions, central nervous system	59.1	57.6	65.6	64.2	67.8
Diseases of heart	221.6	208.4	242.8	239.0	251.2
Chronic rheumatic heart disease	12.4	11.2	12.4	12.5	13.2
Arteriosclerotic and degenerative heart disease	171.3	155.4	187.1	179.5	187.3
Diseases of coronary arteries	102.2	92.0	108.4	106.2	109.4
Hypertension with heart disease	30.9	33.2	34.9	37.9	41.0
Other diseases of heart	7.0	8.6	8.4	9.1	9.7
Hypertension without mention of heart	4.4	4.4	4.9	5.7	5.9
General arteriosclerosis	4.3	5.1	5.8	5.9	6.3
Other diseases of circulatory system	6.0	5.7	5.7	5.3	4.7
Nephritis and nephrosis	7.4	8.5	8.7	9.4	10.8
Pneumonia	9.9	10.2	13.9	13.3	16.5
Influenza	.3	.2	1.0	1.1	3.5
Ulcers of stomach and duodenum	4.4	4.2	4.7	4.6	4.9
Appendicitis	1.1	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4
Hernia and intestinal obstruction	3.5	2.8	3.9	3.9	3.9
Gastritis, duodenitis, enteritis, etc	2.5	2.0	2.4	2.5	2.4
Cirrhosis of liver	10.5	10.5	10.1	9.9	10.1
Diseases of the gallbladder and biliary ducts	2.6	3.1	3.3	3.2	3.6
Complications of pregnancy, childbirth	1.0	1.6	1.0	1.1	1.3
Congenital malformations	2.0	2.5	2.8	2.9	3.1
Suicide	6.4	5.7	6.2	5.6	6.1
Homicide	1.9	2.1	2.1	2.3	3.0
Accidents—total	42.7	37.5	36.9	37.0	37.9
Motor vehicle	17.3	15.4	14.9	14.4	15.6
Home	5.8	4.4	6.0	6.7	7.4
Occupational (civilian)	3.4	3.6	2.5	2.6	3.5
War deaths—enemy action‡	—	.4	¶	3.6	2.3
All other causes	48.4	44.1	52.7	53.5	52.3

*The rates for 1955 are provisional.

†Persons insured under Weekly and Monthly Industrial premium-paying policies for the years 1953-1954; 1955 includes in addition persons with Ordinary Monthly Premium policies for less than $1,000.

‡The recorded mortality from war deaths in 1954 resulted from the payment of claims on policyholders originally reported as missing who were subsequently declared officially dead.

¶Less than 0.05 per 100,000.

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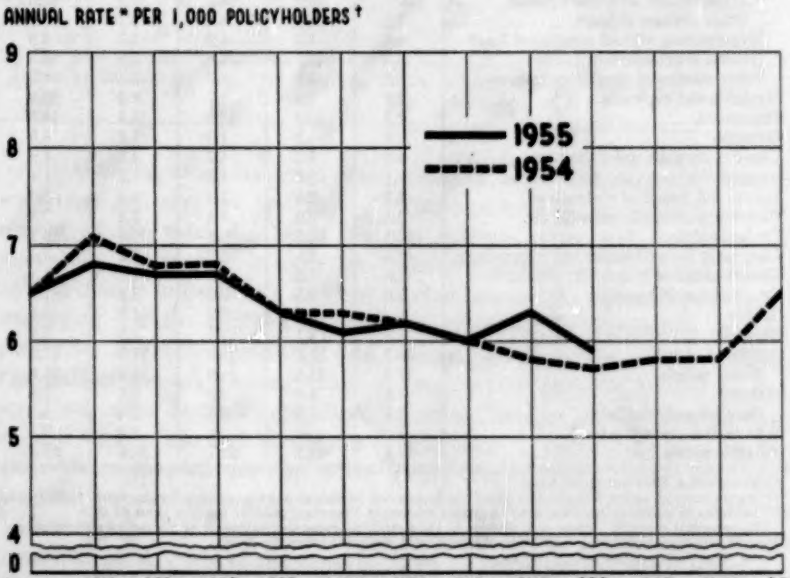
MORTALITY FROM ALL CAUSES

INDUSTRIAL POLICYHOLDERS · METROPOLITAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY



(DEC)	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
1954‡	7.1	6.8	6.8	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.0	5.8	5.7	5.8	5.8	6.5
1955	6.8	6.7	6.7	6.3	6.1	6.2	6.0	6.3	5.9			

*†‡ See page 11 for footnotes

P.F.M.—PRINTED IN U.S.A.—44931—(10-55)